

Toward an Explanation of McCarthyism

809

best for area-wide planning and administration. Indeed, it may be that area-wide planning and administration would of necessity heighten conflicts by raising questions which can only be settled by bitter struggle.

Conflict is not something to be avoided at all costs. It may be well, nevertheless, to consider if there are not decisive advantages in the organizational arrangements which now exist — arrangements which, while handicapping or entirely frustrating some important undertakings, also serve to insulate opposed interests and to protect them from each other. In view of their differences, it may be well, despite the obvious disadvantages, that the peoples of the central cities and of the suburbs live largely in separate political communities.

This is not to conclude that area-wide planning and administration should not be attempted. They should be attempted through the political structures which already exist. Rather than enter upon the probably futile and possibly dangerous course of creating new bodies by consolidation or federation it would be better in those places where fundamental cleavages exist to look to the political leaders of existing jurisdictions to negotiate among

themselves settlements on the basis of which action may proceed. In effect this means that the political leaders of the central cities must be expected to come to terms with the political leaders of the states. For this to occur it is not necessary that both sets of leaders be of the same party, but it is necessary that both have power. In short, the metropolitan area problem will have to be solved — insofar as it is solved at all — by strong mayors and strong governors engaged in political give and take. Where special function districts are required, their managers should be accountable to the voters, but not directly so, for this would entail the transfer of power from one electorate (and thus one party organization) to another, something which is usually not feasible even if desirable. Instead, the people who run such districts should be accountable to a committee of mayors, county supervisors, governors who have a stake in the matter or to a committee of their appropriate subordinates. In this way accountability can be secured without the necessity of changing radically the distribution of political power. On this basis it should be possible to bring together administratively areas which are growing apart politically.

66

TOWARD AN EXPLANATION OF MCCARTHYISM¹

• NELSON W. POLSBY

The recent appearance of an apparently definitive journalistic post-mortem on Senator Joseph McCarthy underscores the rather striking professional inattention of political scientists to one of the most spectacular political phenomena of our time.² For those of us who view

political science as a potentially powerful weapon in the cause of rational political decision-making, this lost opportunity seems especially poignant.³ If it is too late to assist politicians in determining the extent to which they should have allowed themselves to be imprisoned by the demands and the rhetoric of

Printed by permission of The Clarendon Press from *Political Studies* (October, 1960), 250-271.

I have received an extraordinary amount of help and encouragement while pursuing the research reported here. I want to thank Eugene N. Leingold, F. P. Kilpatrick, Robert A. Dentler, Aaron B. Wildavsky, Duane Lockard, Malcolm C. McLean and Francis E. Rourke.

¹ Richard Rovere, *Senator Joe McCarthy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959).

³ No political scientist can properly elaborate upon the subject of policy science without acknowledging a debt to Harold D. Lasswell. A recent contribution of Lasswell's is his Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association, appearing in the *American Political Science Review* (vol. 50, Dec. 1956) as "The Political Science of Science," pp. 961-79. See also Lasswell, "Strategies of Inquiry: The Rational Use of Ob-

McCarthy and his followers, it is not too late to ask more academic questions about who McCarthy's followers really were, and about the sources and extent of his power.⁴

I. THREE HYPOTHESES

This paper is by no means the first attempt to discuss the social sources and political pretensions of McCarthyism. In fact, numerous ingenious explanations of the McCarthy phenomenon have been proffered.⁵ Furthermore, sophisticated students have seldom relied upon any single explanation. In reducing previous explanations to three hypotheses, then, I have no doubt greatly simplified the viewpoints of the writers who first suggested them.

One hypothesis which attempts to account for McCarthy's rise to prominence lays heavy stress on "atmospheric" conditions surrounding the position of the United States after the Second World War. Instead of being allowed to relax into their customary inter-war posture of "normalcy," Americans were faced with the necessity of continuing their foreign entanglements, owing to the hostility of the Russians and the debilitation of our overseas allies. This hypothesis suggests that many Americans were unhappy at this turn of events, and that many of them interpreted these events as the inexorable result of involvement in "foreign" wars. These citizens opposed large-scale spending for foreign economic aid, were progressively angered by the fall of China and the discovery of atomic spies both here and abroad, had always been skeptical of alliances with Great Britain, and became bitterly frustrated at the seemingly endless maneuvers of the Cold War and the Korean conflict. Senator McCarthy's approach to politics, so runs the argu-

servation," in Daniel Lerner, ed., *The Human Meaning of the Social Sciences* (New York: Meridian, 1959), pp. 89-113, and Lasswell, "The Intelligence Function: Built-in Errors," *PROD* 3 (Sept. 1959), pp. 3-7.

⁴ The extent to which academic men, as well as men of power, failed to ask these questions when they were politically relevant is documented in Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens, Jr., *The Academic Mind* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958).

⁵ See an excellent review which extracts explanatory propositions from mostly hortatory literature on McCarthyism: Dennis H. Wrong, "Theories of McCarthyism," *Dissent*, I (Autumn 1954), pp. 385-92.

POLICY FORMATION AND POLITICAL RESEARCH

ment, gave support to the nostalgia of isolationists, many of whom had ancestral ties with Germany, and was congenial to those who harbored populist and anglophobic sentiments.⁶

From this hypothesis we should deduce that McCarthy would find support among people of German extraction, among isolationists, and among those who preferred dramatic activity to patience in the conduct of foreign affairs. Evidence on these points is not conclusive, but certainly suggests the plausibility of this hypothetical description of McCarthy supporters. For example, Samuel Lubell has reported two chief sources of strength for Senator McCarthy:

One was the frustrations that arose out of the Korean War, which often took the form of voters demanding "Why don't we clean up these Commies at home with our boys dying in Korea?" . . . The second main source of McCarthy strength came in areas which opposed our entry into the last war.⁷

Lubell also indicates that McCarthy ran better in those Wisconsin townships with high German populations than he did in the rest of the state.⁸

Hodges, Graham, and Anderson, in a study of Pierce County, Wisconsin, discovered that McCarthy supporters could be found disproportionately among those of German extraction, and among those who are "skeptical about foreign involvements on the part of the United States . . . [favoring] discontinuing both economic and military aid to Asiatic and European nations, and [feeling] that the Korean conflict was a mistake."⁹

Information from various Gallup surveys is also relevant. A study of New London County,

⁶ See, for expositions of this hypothesis, Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (2nd ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 164; Samuel Lubell, "The Question is Why," review of *The New American Right* in the *New York Times Book Review*, 11 Dec. 1955; Peter Viereck, "The Revolt Against The Elite," in Daniel Bell, ed., *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion, 1955), pp. 91-116; Talcott Parsons, "Social Strains in America," in *ibid.*, pp. 117-40.

⁷ Samuel Lubell, *Revolt of the Moderates* (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 268.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁹ Harold M. Hodges, Jr., Charles Graham, and Philip Anderson, "A Sociological Analysis of McCarthy Supporters," a paper delivered at the Fifty-second Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society, Washington, D.C., Aug. 1957.

Toward an F

Connecticut reasons people was that "and 'sincerity' 'get tough.' response among Pennsylvania McCarthy because he about things.

It seems contributed McCarthy's rise rationalization sumably this and, save in German-American not explain, political possible population could have been

Many people McCarthy's power a great length that a substantial "approved of" atmospheric crudely between and those un-

¹⁰ John M. F. on McCarthy," ion news release.

¹¹ George G. Tube' Towns Sp. American Institute 26 June 1954.

¹² A trend line was released on Institute of Public results:

Date
June 1953
Aug.
Jan. 1954
Mar.
Apr.
May
June
Aug.
Nov.

McCarthy also wide survey of "in 1954. George C. mired Men," American news release, 26 D

... of isolation-
... estral ties with
... to those who
...ophobic senti-

... could deduce that
... among people of
... lationists, and
... amatic activity to
... gn affairs. Even
... clusive, but cer-
... of this hypo-
... arthy supporters
... as reported two
... ator McCarthy

... arose out of the
... ne form of votes
... up these Commies
... Korea?" . . . The
... strength came in
... into the last war

... arthy ran better
... with high Ger-
... in the rest of the

... person, in a study
... discovered that
... he found dispo-

... German extrac-
... "skeptical about
... part of the United
... taining both eco-
... atic and European
... the Korean conflict

... Gallup surveys in
... w London County

... hypothesis. Samuel
... in Politics (2nd ed.,
... ay, 1956), p. 164
... is Why," review of
... the New York Times
... Peter Viereck. "The
... in Daniel Bell, ed.,
... ew York: Criticism
... sons, "Social Struc-
... -40.
... the Moderates (New

... Charles Graham, and
... ical Analysis of Mc-
... delivered at the House
... the American Social
... D.C., Aug. 1957.

Connecticut, indicated that one of the major reasons people gave for supporting McCarthy was that "They admire greatly his 'courage' and 'sincerity,' feeling that he is not afraid to 'get tough.'" ¹⁰ Gallup also reported a similar response among citizens of East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, where many citizens favored McCarthy because of his "fearlessness," and because he "gets a lot done the way he goes about things."¹¹

It seems likely that the political atmosphere contributed in some general sense to McCarthy's rise, and supplied his followers with rationalizations for supporting him. But presumably this atmosphere existed for everyone, and, save in the case of the relatively small German-American group, the hypothesis does not explain, for the purpose of assessing his political possibilities at any time, where in the population most of McCarthy's supporters could have been located.

Many people have been persuaded that McCarthy's potential was considerable, since for a great length of time Gallup surveys recorded that a substantial proportion of the population "approved of" McCarthy in some sense.¹² The atmospheric hypothesis differentiates only crudely between those favorable to McCarthy and those unfavorable, on the basis of gen-

¹⁰ John M. Fenton, "Barometer" Area Divided on McCarthy," American Institute of Public Opinion news release, 22-Jan. 1954.

¹¹ George Gallup, "Two Pennsylvania 'Test-Tube' Towns Split Sharply in Views on McCarthy," American Institute of Public Opinion news release, 26 June 1954.

¹² A trend line on Senator McCarthy's popularity was released on 12 Nov. 1954 by the American Institute of Public Opinion, showing the following results:

Date	Favorable %	Unfavorable %	No opinion %
June 1953	35	30	35
Aug.	34	42	24
Jan. 1954	50	29	21
Mar.	46	36	18
Apr.	38	46	16
May	35	49	16
June	34	45	21
Aug.	36	51	13
Nov.	35	46	19

McCarthy also ran fourth in the Gallup nationwide survey of "most admired men in the world," in 1954. George Gallup, "Ike Tops Ten Most Admired Men," American Institute of Public Opinion news release, 26 Dec. 1954.

eralized attitudes toward historical events, and identifies more exactly only a small portion of McCarthy's alleged followers.

A second hypothesis derives from the researches of Adorno and his associates¹³ and identifies McCarthy as an authoritarian leader. Authoritarianism implies a host of rather misanthropic social attitudes including "toughness," superconformity, intolerance, generalized hostility, and an unusual concern with sexual "goings on." Many observers, pointing out that Senator McCarthy exhibited more than his share of these hostile attitudes, deduced that throughout the population those individuals who were most authoritarian would be most likely to be McCarthyites.¹⁴

This hypothesis has gained some confirmation, but contrary evidence suggests the need for more precise specification of the personality characteristics which are supposed to have caused pro-McCarthy sentiments.

Hodges, Graham, and Anderson report that McCarthyites were "more conformistic, agreeing that there are too many 'odd-balls' around, that the 'good' American doesn't stand out among his fellow Americans, and that children should not develop hobbies which are . . . unusual", and more misanthropic, "concurring with statements that 'people are out to cheat you,' and that 'there is wickedness, cheating and corruption all about us.'" ¹⁵

However, some students have noticed that there were relatively intolerant groups in the population whose members nevertheless seemed markedly impervious to McCarthy's charismatic charm.¹⁶ And, conversely, it has been established that members of other groups which were not notably intolerant have supported him

¹³ T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper, 1950).

¹⁴ The "authoritarianism" hypothesis is advanced by Richard Hofstadter, "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," in Bell, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-35, and David Riesman and Nathan Glazer, "The Intellectuals and the Discontented Classes," in *ibid.*, pp. 56-90. See also Immanuel Wallerstein, "McCarthyism and the Conservative," unpublished M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1954; James A. Wechsler, "Where Proof of Innocence Becomes Damning Evidence of Guilt," *Washington Post*, 3 May 1953; Richard Rovere, *op. cit.*, *passim*; and Michael Straight, *Trial By Television* (Boston: Beacon, 1954), *passim*.

¹⁵ Hodges, Graham, and Anderson, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ This criticism is in effect a special application

to a disproportionate degree.¹⁷ A third hypothesis attempts to account for these findings by making reference to the needs and aspirations of certain groups within the population which were satisfied, it is suggested, through McCarthyite activity.

The authors of *The New American Right* have advanced this hypothesis in its most full-blown and persuasive form. This volume is a collection of essays by a distinguished group of social scientists, all attempting to explain the social sources and consequences of McCarthyism. The nature of American politics has changed, they say, so as to render the McCarthy movement unintelligible to conventional forms of political analysis. They call for a "new" type of analysis, one that recognizes the significance of the emergence of status groups as entities making important demands upon the rest of American society, through the political system.¹⁸ In times of economic distress demands are made along class lines; economic "interests" divide the nation's wealth and income by putting pressures of various kinds upon one another and on the government, which acts as a mediating and legitimizing agent for society and as a forum for the expression of dissatisfactions and the promulgation of panaceas. In periods of prosperity the continuing adjustments of interests to each other and to the resources of the economy yield the center of political attention to the demands of

of more general strictures against the Authoritarian Personality study. See Richard Christie and Marie Jahoda, eds., *Studies in the Scope and Method of the Authoritarian Personality* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1954). For indications that non-followers of McCarthy may be at least as authoritarian as his followers see Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), p. 129; Seymour Martin Lipset, "Democracy and Working Class Authoritarianism," *American Sociological Review*, 24 (Aug. 1959), p. 484. Hodges, Graham, and Anderson, *op. cit.*, found that McCarthyites in Pierce County tended to be more anti-Semitic than non-McCarthyites, but were not more anti-Negro. This too suggests that a general "authoritarian" personality syndrome is not an adequate category for the analysis of McCarthyism.

¹⁷ See Stouffer, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Martin Trow, "Small Businessmen, Political Tolerance, and Support for McCarthy," *American Journal of Sociology*, 64 (Nov. 1958), pp. 270-81.

¹⁸ Daniel Bell, "Interpretations of American Politics," in Bell, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 4 ff.

status groups, which use the arena to insist on the improvement or maintenance of their status position in society. In times of economic well-being the "dynamic of dissent" resides in those status groups who wish to change the *status quo* — and of course consider themselves at a disadvantage in the status hierarchy. The McCarthy movement, the authors agree, expresses a non-economic form of protest which can only mean that those in society who supported McCarthy did so because of status dissatisfactions.¹⁹

The authors could have predicted from this hypothesis those groups which should be pro-McCarthy and those which should be anti-McCarthy. Secondly, they could have checked these predictions against the available evidence. In fact, they took only one of these steps, deducing who McCarthy's followers might be. It can easily be seen from an inspection of Table I that the "status politics" hypothesis is much too inclusive to have very much explanatory power. Although it may accurately estimate why specific members of each of the groups named may have found McCarthy an attractive political figure (i.e., because of their status anxieties) it neither differentiates successfully among groups, nor provides criteria by which some groups can be excluded from its purview.

A second step would have been to check deductions against facts. Only Lipset, among *The New American Right* essayists, attempted to do so, and he presents only his conclusions from findings, rather than the findings themselves. At the time of publication of *The New American Right* there were several sources available which might have confirmed at least partially some of the predictions made in these essays. I present the relevant conclusions of these sources in Table II.

As Table II indicates, the "status anxieties" hypothesis yields rather indifferent results, since

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Hofstadter, pp. 33, 34, 43 f.; Lipset, "The Sources of the 'Radical Right,'" pp. 167 ff. This hypothesis suggests a new application for the concept of "relative deprivation," which urges that disprivilege be considered not as an objective social position, but rather as a state of mind which occurs when the aspirations of a group exceed its current resources. See Alice S. Rossi and Robert K. Merton, "Contributions to the Theory of Reference Group Behavior," in Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1957, revised ed.), pp. 225-80.

Toward a

I. A
II. A
III. A
IV. A
V. A
VI. A
es
ye
tr
ber
sm
Sou

it apparently
the popular
tionately pro
evidence in
McCarthyite
is no reason
ity of the se
are based,
mere surmis
followers.²⁰
most writing

²⁰ A tremen
surveys in wh
were included
followed two
enter a given
or did not sup
county survey
sylvania "test-
The reports of
graphic break
contribute to
was the nation
asked questions
III-XI. In the
into various de
tional, religious
ages for and a
were reported.
appeared, amon
14 Mar., and 2
for example, y
geographical ca

Location
East
Midwest
South
West

na to insist on
of their status
economic well-
resides in those
the status quo
selves at a dis-
chy. The Mc-
agree, expresses
which can only
supported Mc-
tus dissatisfac-

ected from this
should be pro-
should be anti-
d have checked
ailable evidence.
these steps, de-
ters might be. It
ection of Table I
esis is much too
planatory power.
timate why spe-
groups named
n attractive po-
their status anxi-
cessfully among
by which some
ts purview.

been to check
Lipset, among
ayists, attempted
his conclusions
e findings them-
tion of *The New*
several sources
confirmed at least
ns made in these
t conclusions of

"status anxieties"
rent results, since

43 f.; Lipset, "The
" pp. 167 ff. This
plication for the
" which urges that
an objective social
mind which occurs
exceed its current
and Robert K. Mer-
eory of Reference
K. Merton, *Social*
ience: Free Press

Toward an Explanation of McCarthyism

813

TABLE I. *Groups Comprising the New American Right (i.e. McCarthyites)*

- I. Named in six out of seven essays: New rich.
- II. Named in five essays: Texans, Irish, Germans.
- III. Named in four essays: Middle class, Catholics, Midwesterners.
- IV. Named in three essays: Lower middle class, up-mobile, less educated.
- V. Named in two essays: "Cankered intellectuals," old family Protestant "shabby genteel," recent immigrants, down-mobile, minority ethnics, Old Guard G.O.P., ex-Communists, Midwest isolationists.
- VI. Named in one essay: Lower class, small town lawyers, auto dealers, oil wildcatters, real estate manipulators, small business men, manual workers, elderly and retired, rentier class, youth, Southern Californians, South Bostonians, fringe urbanites in middle-sized cities, transplants to city, Polish Catholics, hick Protestants, patriotic and historical group members (e.g. DAR), Scandinavians, Southern Protestant fundamentalists, soured patricians, small town residents, neo-fascists.

Source: *The New American Right*.

it apparently fails to account for two groups in the populace found to have been disproportionately pro-McCarthy, yet on the other hand evidence indicates that some groups named as McCarthyite in fact were not. Although there is no reason to be enthusiastic about the quality of the sources on which these conclusions are based, they are very much better than mere surmises about McCarthy's grass roots followers.²⁰ Given the speculative nature of most writing on McCarthy, attention should be

paid to these empirical findings, despite their limitations.

Other criticisms can be made of *The New American Right*. The assertion that "status groups" are at the heart of the McCarthy movement is essentially trivial. The task was to determine which status groups were peculiarly situated so as to be especially favorable to McCarthy. And the identification of some of the groups named as McCarthyite is simply

²⁰ A tremendous number of Gallup quota control surveys in which questions about Senator McCarthy were included have been taken. These surveys followed two patterns: first, interviewers would enter a given locale and ask why respondents did or did not support McCarthy (e.g. the New London county survey reported 22 Jan. 1954, or the Pennsylvania "test-tube" towns reported 26 June 1954). The reports of these surveys do not include demographic breakdowns of respondents, and did not contribute to Table II. The second kind of survey was the nationwide poll, in which respondents were asked questions such as those appearing in Tables III-XI. In these surveys respondents were broken into various demographic categories: e.g. occupational, religious, and geographical. The percentages for and against McCarthy in each category were reported. Reports of surveys such as this appeared, among other dates, on 15 and 16 Jan., 14 Mar., and 23 May 1954. The 15 Jan. survey, for example, yielded the following results in the geographical category:

Location	Reponse		
	Pro-McCarthy	Anti-McCarthy	No opinion
	%	%	%
East	55	27	18
Midwest	48	27	25
South	47	30	23
West	46	36	18

Now these categories are obviously not precise enough to furnish intelligible data on the location of McCarthy supporters within the population. Nevertheless, the relationships among various segments of the population with respect to their sentiments towards McCarthy remained stable over a great many polls, and give us a basis on which we can rank these groups for McCarthyite sympathies. It is in this sense that Gallup data is used in Table II. When Gallup data show consistently that a high proportion of Easterners (let us say) favor McCarthy, over those who oppose him, as compared with a similar ratio among people from other parts of the country, I felt justified in giving a "Yes" in the appropriate box in Table II. I gave a "No" when any group registered consistently anti-McCarthy, or ranked behind half of those groups in a similar category (e.g. geographical) in support of McCarthy.

Louis Bean's monograph *Influences in the 1954 Mid-Term Elections* (Washington: Public Affairs Institute, 1954) provides the second source of data. Bean analysed election returns in races where McCarthy ran for office, in 1946 and 1952. He also discusses the impact of the issue of Communists in government by making inferences from 1950 and 1952 election returns in selected states and counties throughout the country. Bean's major findings are (1) that McCarthy seems to have enjoyed greater support in rural than in urban areas in his home state, (2) that pro-McCarthy results seem to have

TABLE II. *Groups Comprising the New American Right, According to Empirical Evidence*

The vertical axis ranks groups according to the number of essays out of seven in which they are explicitly mentioned in *The New American Right*. The horizontal axis lists sources of empirical data in support of (Yes) or against (No) the listing of groups as nuclei of New American Right sentiment. See footnote 20 for an evaluation of these sources.

Group	Gallup	Bean	Harris
5			
(1) Germans	—	No	—
(2) Irish	—	—	No
4			
(3) Catholics	Yes	Yes	—
3			
(4) Less educated	Yes	Yes	—
2			
(5) Minority ethnics	Yes & No	Yes & No	Yes & No
(6) Republicans	Yes	—	—
(7) Recent immigrants	Yes & No	Yes & No	—
1			
(8) Lower class	Yes	Yes	—
(9) Manual workers	Yes	—	—
(10) Polish Catholics	—	Yes	—
(11) Elderly	Yes	—	—
(12) Youth	No	—	No
(13) Scandinavians	—	No	—
Groups not named in <i>The New American Right</i>			
(1) Farmers	Yes	Yes	—
(2) New Englanders	Yes	—	—

Sources: American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll), *Influences in the Mid-Term Election, 1954* (Bean), *Is There A Republican Majority?* (Harris).

implausible. This should weigh heavily in the case of the book under discussion, where the basic argument depends on plausibility rather than more "scientific" demonstrations of truth. For example, it is unclear why members of the DAR should release status anxieties by joining in an attack on the very social groups whose history their organization celebrates. That status anxieties can drive people to attack

others — especially the weak — is a reasonable enough argument, but if it is in principle possible to negate *The New American Right* thesis in any way, surely the cases of white Protestant "shabby genteel" McCarthyites succeed in doing so. Finally, it should be noted that the introduction of ethnic and status considerations into political analysis can hardly be said to have originated with the authors of *The New Amer-*

occurred in those areas where the "Catholic index" was relatively high. This Catholic index is apparently the 1936 census of religious bodies, brought up to 1954 on the assumption that changes in the intervening years were proportional in all areas. This assumption weakens Bean's case considerably, but alternative sources of data about the geographical distribution of religious groups within states were not available. Bean also presents data in an appendix relating 1950 census data on the ethnic compositions of Wisconsin counties to their support of McCarthy.

Louis Harris presents an analysis of the 1952 Roper election surveys in *Is There a Republican Majority?* (New York: Harper, 1954). He says that people of Irish descent were split about evenly on McCarthy (p. 90), and that young people broke with Eisenhower in 1952 because of his appeasement of McCarthy and the right wing of the Republican Party generally (p. 168). Harris does not concern himself directly with McCarthy, except briefly, and he presents little in the way of hard data on the subject; hence his book is of limited value.

Toward

ican A
practic
political
demic
politics

Since

Right,

new da

pothesi

Bennin

McCar

than no

educati

ceived

from tr

munity

McCar

those m

econom

ness me

modern

organiz

These

in so far

bers of

they als

factors

anxieties

of McC

I want

one whic

a politica

that ana

21 Mart

22 See

and Wor

Herbert

cate that

and misa

subscrib

McClosky

can Polit

27-45. T

student of

nized that

gram" —

foundly an

tolerant, h

possible th

servatives

approach.

content —

do not rel

logical pre

pathies or

solved.

ican Right, as they themselves, aware of the practices of "ticket balancing," the folklore of political "availability," and long-standing academic interest in the group conflict theory of politics, no doubt realize.

Since the publication of *The New American Right*, Martin Trow has come forward with new data bearing on the "status anxieties" hypothesis.²¹ He concludes from his study of Bennington, Vermont, that: (1) Supporters of McCarthy were not more politically intolerant than non-supporters of McCarthy when formal education was held constant. McCarthy received a disproportionate share of his support from the less educated members of the community, who are always less tolerant.²² (2) McCarthy received much greater support from those members of the middle class who were economically at a disadvantage (e.g. small business men) and who expressed hostility towards modern forms of political and economic organization.

These findings support all three hypotheses in so far as they identify McCarthyites as members of a movement of generalized protest. But they also indicate that economic and political factors may have been as important as status anxieties in explaining the social sources of of McCarthyism.

I want to turn now to a fourth hypothesis, one which attempts to explain McCarthyism as a political phenomenon. It is a surprising fact that analysts have discounted so heavily the

purely political aspect of his success. Therefore I want to review now the rather heavy evidence supporting the hypothesis that McCarthy succeeded at the grass roots primarily among Republicans.

For example, I present immediately below in Table III the results of a re-analysis of a Gallup survey.²³ In this re-analysis I have attempted to differentiate between those who were for and those against McCarthy. Pro- and anti-McCarthy populations were selected by tabulating responses to the following question: "In general, would you say you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Senator Joseph McCarthy?"

The data at hand were limited; none the less they provided an opportunity to test in some approximate way the predictions of each of the hypotheses thus far offered to account for McCarthy's grass roots support.

The nationwide questionnaire tapped possible pro-German sentiments among respondents, with the results shown in Table IV. The results, while not extreme, are in the direction indicated by the "atmospheric" hypothesis.

Authoritarians, it is said, tend to be politically confused and badly informed.²⁴ The na-

TABLE III. Popularity of Senator Joseph McCarthy

	N	%
Favorable	456	31
Unfavorable	693	46
No opinion	287	19
Don't know him	41	3
	1,477	99

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, 6 April 1954.

²³ This work was computed for me by The Roper Public Opinion Research Center at Williams College, on a grant made available by the Political Science Department of Yale University. I am grateful to Philip K. Hastings and Robert A. Dahl, of Williams and Yale, respectively, for supporting this part of my research. The Gallup Survey whose results appear here was number 529 K, 6 Apr. 1954.

²⁴ See Adorno *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 658 ff.; Fillmore H. Stanford, *Authoritarianism and Leadership* (Philadelphia: Institute for Research in Human Relations, 1950), p. 159. Low levels of political information have been found to correlate with low personal involvement in politics, and these in

²¹ Martin Trow, *op. cit.*

²² See Stouffer, *op. cit.*, and Lipset, "Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism," *loc. cit.* Herbert McClosky has some findings which indicate that greater degrees of intolerance, hostility, and misanthropy also characterize those persons subscribing to "conservative" ideology. Herbert McClosky, "Conservatism and Personality," *American Political Science Review*, 52 (Mar. 1958), pp. 27-45. This presents an interesting puzzle for the student of McCarthyism. It is generally well recognized that the content of McCarthy's political "program" — such as it was — was destructive and profoundly anti-conservative, as well as politically intolerant, hostile, and misanthropic. It is entirely possible that McCarthy's followers were either conservatives responding favorably to the tone of his approach, or radicals responding to its manifest content — or both. Regrettably, McClosky's data do not relate personality characteristics and ideological predispositions to current political sympathies or activities, hence this puzzle must go unresolved.

tionwide survey asked a series of questions designed to elicit political information of various kinds. McCarthyites and non-McCarthyites were able to identify Far Eastern political leaders correctly to about the same degree, but, once again, the slight differences recorded were all in the expected direction. This is also true of the questions asking about participation in the last election, and in elections generally (see Tables V, VI).

The same thing happens when crude tests of the "status" hypothesis are applied, the assumption being that a higher proportion of McCarthyites come from the Catholic, lower class, and less educated parts of the population. The tables (VII, VIII, and IX) show, once again, tendencies in the direction of confirmation.

But this relatively meagre empirical confirmation is unimpressive when set against comparable figures describing the two populations by their political affiliations (see Table X).

These findings speak for themselves, but do not stand alone. The distributions of McCarthy's vote in Wisconsin, where, it should be admitted, "The impact [of McCarthyism] on the political and cultural life of the state was not particularly great,"²⁵ indicate strongly that McCarthy ran best in the most heavily Repub-

turn would lead us to assume that authoritarians participate less in politics than non-authoritarians. See Morris Janowitz and Dwaine Marvick, "Authoritarianism and Political Behavior," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 17 (Summer 1953), pp. 185-201; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, *The Peoples' Choice* (New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1944); and Morris Rosenberg, "Some Determinants of Political Apathy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 18 (Winter 1954), pp. 349-66. The relationship is regrettably not so simple, as Robert E. Lane has demonstrated: "Political Personality and Electoral Choice," *American Political Science Review*, 49 (Mar. 1955), pp. 173-90. Apparently, when class is controlled, authoritarians have been found to participate in elections about as much as non-authoritarians, but possibly for different reasons. I include figures on participation here, first because they were available, and second because they reinforce both my own conclusion — that McCarthyites differentiate themselves slightly by their lower rates of participation — and Lane's conclusion — that the differences between presumably authoritarian and non-authoritarian populations with respect to their political participation is negligible.

²⁵ Leon D. Epstein, *Politics in Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), p. 4.

TABLE IV. *Sentiment about Germany of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy*

Would you, yourself, like to see Germany again become one of the three or four most powerful countries?

	F (%)	U (%)
Yes	29	25
No	56	59
No opinion	7	8
Qualified	8	8
	100	100
	((N = 454)	(N = 690)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

lican areas, and conversely. James G. March has demonstrated this point conclusively with respect to the 1952 primary election.²⁶ Samuel Lubell has observed that Senator McCarthy in 1952 ran well ahead of his state average in townships populated heavily by people of German extraction, but this also was true of other Republicans, including Senator Taft in the 1952 primary, and Republican Presidential candidates in 1944, 1948, and 1952.²⁷ Inspection of election returns bears out the thesis that McCarthy ran best where the Republican Party was strongest. McCarthy's strongest showing in 1952, for example, generally took place in those counties giving Walter Kohler, Republican candidate for Governor, their heaviest support. Out of the 71 counties in Wisconsin, 30 gave McCarthy a margin of 2-1 or better, and of these 30, 24 were counties in which Governor Kohler beat his opponent by 3-1 or more. In the 29 counties where he made his strongest race, capturing 75 per cent or more of the two-party vote. Kohler received only 28 per cent of his state-wide vote. But in the 30 counties where McCarthy received 65 per cent of the vote or more, fully 35 per cent of McCarthy's state-wide vote was concentrated.²⁸

²⁶ James G. March, "McCarthy Can Still Be Beaten," *Reporter*, 7 (28 Oct. 1952), pp. 17-19.

²⁷ Lubell, *Revolt*, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

²⁸ It should be remembered that we are not talking about Wisconsin's more populous counties in this analysis, which no doubt explains why a majority of the state-wide Republican vote is not located in those counties giving Republicans their heaviest majorities. See also Bean, *op. cit.*

Germany of
unfavorable
McCarthy
Germany again
most powerful

TABLE V. Political Information of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy

Will you please tell me which of these men you have heard of? And will you tell me what country he is from?

	Favorable			Unfavorable		
	Chiang (%)	Mao (%)	Nehru (%)	Chiang (%)	Mao (%)	Nehru (%)
Yes, correct country	89	34	60	88	42	67
Yes, incorrect or don't know country	6	19	12	8	20	9
Not heard of, no answer	5	47	28	4	38	24
	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(N = 458)	(N = 455)	(N = 454)	(N = 700*)	(N = 689)	(N = 690)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

* The fact that the Ns here exceed the total unfavorable population of 693 is perhaps on account of double responses in a small number of cases.

These figures demonstrate that the McCarthy vote was concentrated in areas of Republican strength, and was neither scattered, nor distributed in some pattern unique to McCarthy, nor particularly strong.

Deciding where McCarthyites at the grass roots were located is of course not sufficient to explain his success in official Washington. Many cogent reasons for McCarthy's success have been given, and since they are mutually complementary it is unnecessary to choose among them. McCarthy was, at first, the weapon of a desperate Republican Party. Sen-

ator Taft's famous advice, "If one case doesn't work, then bring up another,"²⁹ is a measure of the lengths to which Republicans were willing to go in those days to embarrass a long-entrenched Democratic administration. Secondly, there was McCarthy's protected position as a member of the Senate.³⁰ While he was

²⁹ William S. White, *The Taft Story* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 85; Jack Anderson and Ronald W. May, *McCarthy: The Man, The Senator, The 'Ism'* (Boston: Beacon, 1952), p. 353.

³⁰ One analysis which covers these points especially well is Aaron B. Wildavsky's "Exploring the

TABLE VI. Political Participation of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy

- Question I. Have you ever voted in any election, or don't you pay any attention to politics?
Question II. In the election in November 1952, did things come up which kept you from voting, or did you happen to vote?

	Favorable		Unfavorable	
	I (%)	II (%)	I (%)	II (%)
Yes	86	77	89	81
No	3	20	2	14
Never	11	—	9	—
No, too young	—	3	—	5
	100	100	100	100
	(N = 456)	(N = 455)	(N = 692)	(N = 687)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

James G. March conclusively with election.²⁶ Samuel nator McCarthy in s state average in by people of Ger- was true of other for Taft in the 1952 Presidential candi- 1952.²⁷ Inspection of the thesis that Mc- Republican Party s strongest showing rally took place in er Kohler, Republi- their heaviest sup- es in Wisconsin. 30 f 2-1 or better, and ties in which Gov- ponent by 3-1 or where he made his 25 per cent or more hler received only 28 vote. But in the 39 received 65 per cent ally 35 per cent e was concentrated.

McCarthy Can Still Be et. 1952), pp. 17-19 p. 269. ed that we are not tak e populous counties t explains why a m- ublican vote is not b- ving Republicans the so Bean, *op. cit.*

TABLE VII. *Religious Preference of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy*

Question: What is your religious preference: Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish?

	F (%)	U (%)
Protestant	68	71
Catholic	28	20
Jewish	1	5
Other	2	3
	99	99
	(N = 452)	(N = 685)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

never even remotely a significant member of the Club, attacks on him might have been construed by powerful Senators as attacks on Senatorial prerogatives and practices. McCarthy's place in the Senate also gave him the protection of immunity from libel suits, the services of the staff of a Committee, and the powers to hold hearings and issue subpoenas.

Third, one can scarcely discount his personal effectiveness as an imaginative political entrepreneur who exploited the mass media by accommodating his "exposés" to the exigencies of deadlines, and who employed the bulging briefcase, the nonexistent "document," garbled figures, and so on, with stunning effect.³¹ A fourth reason for McCarthy's success was no doubt the vulnerability (real or imagined) of the Truman administration on the issue of Communists in government, and a fifth reason would certainly be the emasculation of administrative resistance to McCarthy's activities, by order of President Eisenhower.³²

All of these are "factors" which contribute to an explanation of McCarthy's phenomenal success in demoralizing federal employees, in blackening the name of the United States

³¹ Content of McCarthyism," *Australian Outlook*, 9 (June 1955), pp. 88-104. See also John B. Oakes, "Inquiry Into McCarthy's Status," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 Apr. 1953.

³² See Rovere, *op. cit.*, and Cecil Holland, "Short Course on McCarthy Techniques," *Washington Star*, 11 Apr. 1954.

³³ See Martin Merson, *The Private Diary of a Public Servant* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 72-81.

POLICY FORMATION AND POLITICAL RESEARCH

abroad, and in dominating the headlines for more than four years. But they do not explain the remarkable fear of McCarthy that seems to have afflicted those somewhat outside his line of fire — newspaper people, professional folk, most academicians, and his colleagues in Congress. This fear can be accounted for, I think, by adding one more factor, a critical assumption made by almost all those for whom McCarthyism was of daily concern. This assumption was that McCarthy was in fact uniquely powerful at the grass roots; that he had a vast following which cross-cut party lines and loyalties, which he could call upon to defeat his enemies. Richard Rovere reports: "After the 1952 elections, it was believed in the Senate that McCarthy was responsible for the presence there of eight men — which meant that he was responsible for the absence of eight others."³³

III. A TEST FOR A CRITICAL ASSUMPTION

Surely a useful task for policy science would have been to test such beliefs of policy-makers against the available evidence. It is disquiet-

TABLE VIII. *Social-economic Rating of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy (Rating by interviewer)*

	F (%)	U (%)
Upper	3	3
Above average	32	34
Average	2	1
Below average	47	45
Lower	11	14
	95*	97*
	(N = 433)	(N = 675)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

* Totals are less than 100 per cent apparently because interviewers failed to rate some respondents.

³³ Rovere, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Rovere has named only five of the eight casualties in his book, and as I write has not responded to a letter asking him to name the other three. He includes Raymond Baldwin and William Benton of Connecticut, Milard Tydings of Maryland, Ernest McFarland of Arizona, and Scott Lucas of Illinois.

Toward an

TABLE IX
The

No sch
Up to
9-12 y
Over 12

Source
1954.

ing to won
changed if
modest num
or none at
documented
was the re
Raymond
William Ben
gain for the
has made ne
the hand of
of the Malm
factor in his

³⁴ McFarlan
the victim of
ing of his op
Lucas was th
fallen prey to

Questions
I Did y
II If the
win in
III (If un
As of
IV In poli

Questic

Republic
Democr
Undecid
Other

TABLE IX. Educational Levels Attained by Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy

	F (%)	U (%)
No school	1	1
Up to 8 years school	26	21
9-12 years	53	51
Over 12 years	17	24
	97	97
	(N = 441)	(N = 682)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

ing to wonder how history might have been changed if the evidence had shown a more modest number of scalps on McCarthy's belt — or none at all. After all, the only thoroughly documented victory of this kind for McCarthy was the replacement of Republican Senator Raymond Baldwin by Democratic Senator William Benton of Connecticut — hardly a net gain for the right wing of the Senate. Baldwin has made no secret of the fact that abuse at the hand of McCarthy during the investigation of the Malmedy massacre was the determining factor in his decision to leave Washington.³⁴

³⁴ McFarland is generally supposed to have been the victim of the uncommonly vigorous campaigning of his opponent, Barry Goldwater, and Scott Lucas was thought by many observers to have fallen prey to the aftermath of the Kefauver crime

It does not seem entirely pointless to undertake an analysis of at least one of the other seven cases. There are those who still believe that McCarthy was a powerful influence with voters all over the nation and that these voters rose up and smote some of his most distinguished adversaries. It seems important to make at least a token effort to verify this belief. If it is correct, the usual supposition by political scientists that political support is in general not transferable from one figure to another must go by the board. We would have to conclude that American politics is a more dangerous and unstable game than we had suspected, if a demagogue can criss-cross the country and impose his will upon the electorates of states far from his own.

Political observers seem most willing to grant that McCarthy was important in the defeat of Senator Tydings in 1950, and of Senator Benton in 1952. Rovere says: "McCarthy, a nobody in 1949, threw his weight against Tydings in 1950, and, lo, Tydings lost";³⁵ and, "... he had, in fact, attended to Senator Benton's expulsion by the voters of Connecticut."³⁶ McCarthy's reputation for grass roots political effectiveness outside his home state rests most

investigations. Rovere may be claiming more for McCarthy here than most people ever gave him credit for.

³⁵ Rovere, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

TABLE X. Party Sympathies and Voting Records of Those Favorable and Unfavorable to Senator J. McCarthy

Questions

- I Did you vote for Eisenhower (Republican) or Stevenson (Democratic)?
 II If the elections for Congress were being held today, which party would you like to see win in this state — the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?
 III (If undecided)
 As of today, do you lean more to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?
 IV In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?

Question	Favorable (%)				Unfavorable (%)			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Republican	76	53	37	46	49	29	28	24
Democratic	21	29	23	30	49	57	38	58
Undecided	—	17	27	—	—	13	26	—
Other	3	1	13	24	2	1	8	24
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	(N = 350)	(N = 456)	(N = 77)	(N = 456)	(N = 560)	(N = 693)	(N = 88)	(N = 693)

Source: Gallup Survey 529 K, April 1954.

heavily on these two cases. The easy availability of appropriate statistical materials prompts me to select the Benton case for further examination here.³⁷

William Benton was appointed Senator from Connecticut in 1949 by Governor Chester Bowles, his erstwhile partner in the advertising business, to succeed Raymond Baldwin, who retired to the Connecticut Supreme Court of Errors. There was some question at the time of Benton's appointment as to whether he was a *bona fide* resident of the state of Connecticut, but he was duly qualified, and took his seat. Benton's occupational record was unusually distinguished. He had been an advertising executive, Vice President of the University of Chicago, President of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and an Assistant Secretary of State. In 1950 he stood for election to the seat he had held by appointment, and won with 50.06 per cent of the state-wide two-party vote.

Returning to the Senate, Benton went out of his way to tangle repeatedly with Senator McCarthy, urging an investigation of McCarthy's finances, among other harassments. McCarthy struck back with characteristic resourcefulness, and managed to have Benton investigated too. When Benton stood again for election for his full term, in the fall of 1952, McCarthy campaigned briefly in Connecticut against him. Benton lost, polling 45.80 per cent of the vote.

Rovere, and presumably others, concluded that McCarthy "got" Benton. But no reasonable construction of the evidence at hand seems likely to sustain this conclusion. A few elementary facts about Connecticut politics should be noted. First, Connecticut had no primary system, a situation which has since been changed; hence at the time there was little incentive for most voters to reveal their party affiliations to registrars of voters, and only a minority did so. However, Connecticut voters

³⁷ Those interested in the Tydings case might consult the long, but for our purposes inconclusive, Hearings and Report of the Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections of the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, *The Maryland Senatorial Election of 1950*. Hearings, 20 Feb.-11 Apr. 1951. Senate Report 647 (82 Cong., 1st sess.), or Stanley Kelley, Jr., *Professional Public Relations and Political Power* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), pp. 107-43.

POLICY FORMATION AND POLITICAL RESEARCH

generally vote straight tickets, for all the reasons for which straight tickets are popular in other parts of the country, and also because the voting machines in use in Connecticut make a split ballot difficult. In order to split a ticket, it is necessary first to pull a party lever and then cut individual candidates off the ballot, replacing them with other candidates.³⁸

It should surprise no one to learn, then, that just as Benton's vote went down in 1952 as compared with 1950, so Democratic fortunes generally declined in the same period. For each of these years, the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote for the "top" of the ticket (excluding the race in which Benton figured) was calculated, giving Democratic "norms" for each year.³⁹ For both years Benton's percentage corresponds exactly with the Democratic norm, as Table XI demonstrates.

Now, how are we to account for this general depression in the Democratic vote? It would be too much, I think, to attribute these results to McCarthy's efforts, since a more parsimonious explanation is readily at hand.

TABLE XI. *Democratic Percentage of Two-party Vote in 1950 and 1952, Connecticut*

	1950 (%)	1952 (%)
Benton	50.06	45.80
Democratic norm	50.19	45.87

³⁸ But even without this mechanical aid to straight ticket voting, Connecticut voters seem generally to favor the straight ticket. In 1956, in Wallingford, Connecticut, (pop. 11,994), where an overwhelming majority of voters was registered as independent, I conducted a pre-election survey of between 3 and 4 per cent of the population, using paper and pencil ballots, and over 80 per cent of all ballots were straight tickets. The results and methods of this survey are reported in the Wallingford (Conn.) *Post*, 1 Nov. 1956.

³⁹ In 1950 I averaged the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senator (Long Term), and At Large Representative. In 1952 I averaged the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote for President, Senator (Short Term), and At Large Representative. In 1950 Benton ran for the Short Term, and in 1952 for the Long Term Senatorial Seat. His percentage of the two-party vote is in both cases excluded from the Democratic norm. For their painstaking help in collecting and tabulating these statistics, I want to thank Daniel D. Polsby and Linda O. Polsby.

Toward

Clearly caught Eisenho

It still thy affe by robb and wh This arg that Ben as comp ticket if him.

How necticut's separately in the loc within th devoted his 1950 towns in the norm and fell Benton fe located in cratic tic ran for Se lost by a paratively attributed not to som

We have against two performanc 1950, whe

⁴⁰ Two p be mention voters chang 1952 not be howe but This explan available. T Carthy-gener of General This seems evidence: (1 than Eisenho dous person issues; (3) E McCarthy be Stouffer, op. and Warren ton: Row Peter H. Hyman and peal of Pres Quarterly, 17

Clearly Connecticut Democrats in 1952 were caught in the landslide that elected Dwight D. Eisenhower President.⁴⁰

It still might be argued that Senator McCarthy affected the outcome of the Benton race by robbing Benton of support he had in 1950 and which he could not replace elsewhere. This argument would be based on the premise that Benton would have improved his position as compared with the rest of the Democratic ticket if McCarthy had not campaigned against him.

How to test this assertion? Each of Connecticut's 169 towns reports election returns separately, and so it is possible to detect changes in the location of a candidate's political strength within the state. Fig. 1 shows that Benton deviated by more than 3 per cent in 1952 from his 1950 relationship to the norm in only two towns in the entire state. Benton gained on the norm in 71 towns, stayed the same in 51, and fell behind in 47. Nine of ten towns where Benton fell behind by 3 per cent or more are located in the home county of the 1952 Democratic ticket leader, Abraham Ribicoff, who ran for Senator (short term) in that year, and lost by a narrow margin. Thus Benton's comparatively poor showing in these towns can be attributed to Ribicoff's unusual popularity, and not to some disability of his own.

We have in effect judged McCarthy's impact against two base-lines, by comparing Benton's performance in 1952 with his performance in 1950, when McCarthy did not campaign

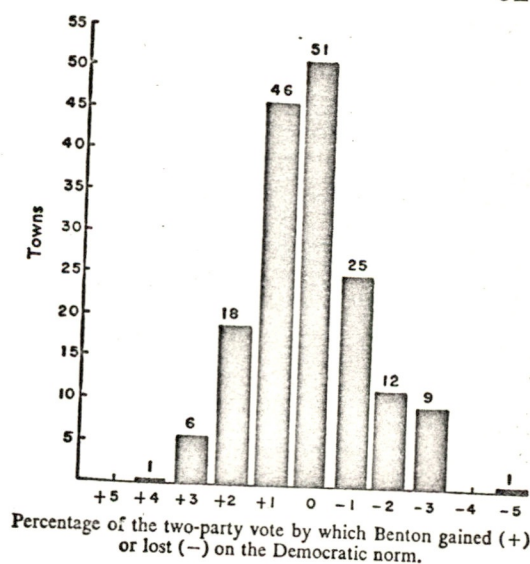


FIGURE 1. Net Change, 1952-1950, in Senator Benton's Percentage of the Two-Party Vote Compared with the Democratic Norm, by Towns in Connecticut

against him, and, secondly, by comparing Benton's performance with that of the rest of the "top" of the state-wide Democratic ticket in 1952, against whom McCarthy did not campaign. This evidence shows that Benton's record deviates hardly at all from the record of his party in state-wide elections for both years. In general, it appears that Benton maintained or improved upon his 1950 record in 1952, a fact obscured by the effects of the Eisenhower landslide. In the light of these findings, the granting of credit to McCarthy for Benton's defeat is no doubt unjustified, if not entirely erroneous.

IV. POLICY SCIENCE AND MCCARTHYISM

It cannot be overemphasized that most of the facts on which this analysis has been based were available while McCarthy was still very much alive, and in the headlines. I think this analysis shows McCarthy to have been more dependent on his party, and personally much less effective at the grass roots, than has been commonly supposed. The erroneous supposition that McCarthy was a powerful figure with some politically meaningful segment of "the

⁴⁰ Two plausible alternative explanations might be mentioned. The first is that 1950 Democratic voters changed over to the Republican Party in 1952 not because they were attracted by Eisenhower but because they were repelled by Benton. This explanation is not testable, given the data available. The second is that McCarthy and McCarthy-generated issues supplied a substantial part of General Eisenhower's personal appeal in 1952. This seems highly unlikely on the basis of much evidence: (1) McCarthy was much less well known than Eisenhower; (2) Eisenhower had a tremendous personal appeal to voters, apart from any issues; (3) Eisenhower ran better in 1956, after McCarthy became passé, than in 1952. Consult Stouffer, *op. cit.*; Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren E. Miller, *The Voter Decides* (Evanston: Row Peterson, 1954); and, especially, Herbert H. Hyman and Paul Sheatsley, "The Political Appeal of President Eisenhower," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 17 (Winter 1953-4), pp. 443-60.

people" no doubt served to make him so in the peculiarly isolated subculture that is official Washington. The consequences of this error are well known to all those who were "tuned in" to news media anywhere in the world over the last decade.

As men of knowledge, policy scientists could profitably turn their attention to making sure that information is readily available which bears on policy questions in order to reduce the incidence of errors of this kind in the future. In the case of McCarthy, commercial polling organizations expended huge sums of money taking the public pulse. Yet time and again opportunities to test important hypotheses about the sources and nature of McCarthy supporters were lost. One example of this was a Gallup Poll which turned up two small neighboring Pennsylvania communities — one of them 2-1 in favor of McCarthy and the other 5-3 against him. Nothing in the report accompanying this finding disclosed any other basis for differentiating these communities — nor did subsequent inquiry to the Gallup organization.⁴¹ Instead of using successive waves of data collection to refine hypotheses about the locations within the population of McCarthy supporters, to over-sample strategic portions of the population, or otherwise to take advantage of the research opportunity before them, the Gallup survey wastefully repeated the same battery of questions with the same type of sample. Hopefully, policy scientists interested in McCarthy's political potential could have brought their working hypotheses to the attention of pollsters who planned in any event to exploit public interest by conducting polls on the McCarthy question.

The political potential of McCarthy was, of course, a major point of interest throughout his brief period of notoriety. Prompt attention to such data as were available could quickly have scotched widely prevalent notions that McCarthy was a fascist leader, or that he was a serious Presidential contender. The essential aimlessness of McCarthy's appeal could be deduced, for example, from the fact that Mc-

Carthy support seems to have been highly diffused and multidimensional, rather than effectively mobilized and focused on concrete political goals.

Consider the following evidence. Pro-McCarthy sentiment has been measured from time to time on different issues. We would assume that McCarthyites according to one measure would be the same people as McCarthyites on another; otherwise, McCarthy's potential political effectiveness must be seen as greatly reduced. Table XII shows the results of such a comparison. Those who express themselves as favorable to McCarthy on particular points tend with some (but by no means unanimous) regularity to be 'generally' favorable to McCarthy. Otherwise, populations in common are irregular, and not conspicuously high. Table XIII, on the other hand, indicates a tendency for anti-McCarthy sentiment to be somewhat more cohesive and self-consistent on a variety of issues.⁴²

⁴² Perfect consistency of responses would be scored in these tables as 100 per cent, which would mean that all of those answering in a pro-McCarthy way on one question also answered in a pro-McCarthy way on another. While 100 per cent is a "perfect score," an unknown percentage is undoubtedly lost through failure to respond to questions, misunderstandings, incorrect recordings of answers, and so on. If we assume that such failures in communication and in the mechanics of polling occur with equal probability in both anti-McCarthy and pro-McCarthy questionnaires, it becomes possible to compare Table XII, which shows consistency scores for a pro-McCarthy population, and Table XIII, which shows similar scores for an anti-McCarthy population. Comparing each of the cells of the tables in turn, we find: 15 cases where the anti-McCarthy population is 20 or more per cent above the pro-McCarthy population in self-consistency; 3 cases where the anti-McCarthy population is 5-19 per cent above the pro-McCarthy population; 6 cases in which the pro- and anti-McCarthy populations are within 4 per cent of one another; 1 case in which the pro-McCarthy population exceeds the anti-McCarthy population in self-consistency by 5-19 per cent; 4 cases in which the pro-McCarthy population is 20 or more per cent above the anti-McCarthy population in self-consistency.

These last four cases all fall in the third question. A moment's reflection will no doubt suggest the obvious proposition that the anti-McCarthy population could reasonably be expected to embrace both people who are willing to defend Army Sec-

I do not mean as this would have calculations of policy become known as technicians have been vice, even when themselves. On the formation of this sought by policy diffusion to political

Let me summarize scientists could McCarthyism during a live issue. First myths about McCarthy have been especially information of crossing McCarthy in a position to which he enjoyed for so atmosphere in which

retary Stevens and But the pro-McCarthy be expected to find the moment. I do interpret these tables provide a simple thumb rule which one might have

⁴¹ Gallup, "Two Pennsylvania Test-tube Towns . . .," *loc. cit.*, and letter to author from Emery H. Ruby, editor, American Institute of Public Opinion, 22 July 1954.

in highly different than effect on concrete

ence. Pro- measured from We would ding to one e as McCar- McCarthy's po- be seen as the results who express rthy on par- py no means erally' favor- opulations in conspicuously and, indicates timent to be consistent on

es would be which would pro-McCarthy ed in a pro- 00 per cent is entage is un- pond to ques- recordings of such failures nes of polling anti-McCarthy becomes pos- nowns consist- ulation, and es for an anti- sh of the cells es where the more per cent in self-consist- ny population arthy popula- anti-McCarthy one another; population ex- in self-consist- nch the pro- er cent above consistency third question at suggest the McCarthy popu- d to embrace and Army Sec-

Toward an Explanation of McCarthyism

823

TABLE XII. Populations in Common Among Various Pro-McCarthy Attitudes

N	I (%)	II (%)	III (%)	IV (%)	V (%)	VI (%)	Total population (%)
I = 309		38	57	84	64	39	22
II = 198	60		64	71	58	32	14
III = 430	41	41		60	42	25	30
IV = 458	57	31	56		57	33	32
V = 306	65	38	59	86		40	22
VI = 178	69	36	60	85	69		15

Source: Gallup Survey 530 K, April 1954.

Responses compared

- I. Extreme liking (+ 3 to 5) for McCarthy on 11 point scale.
- II. No to "Do you think that McCarthy and Cohn used improper means in trying to get a commission for Schine?"
- III. YES to "Do you think that Stevens and Adams tried to stop McCarthy from investigating the Army at Fort Monmouth?"
- IV. Favorable general opinion of Senator McCarthy.
- V. "Approve" to "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the methods used by McCarthy?"
- VI. McCarthy's support would make respondent more likely to vote for a congressional candidate.

I do not mean to argue that evidence such as this would have been influential in the calculations of political decision-makers, had it become known among policy scientists. Politicians have been known to ignore expert advice, even when they were paying for it themselves. On the other hand, the fact that information of this kind was neither known nor sought by policy scientists entirely precluded its diffusion to politicians.

Let me summarize, in conclusion, what policy scientists could have established about McCarthyism during the period when it was still a live issue. First, they could have confronted myths about McCarthy with facts. It would have been especially useful if they had mobilized information about the actual consequences of crossing McCarthy and diffused it to those in a position to withhold from him the freedom he enjoyed for so long to create the political atmosphere in which he thrived. Second, they

retary Stevens and people who disapproved of him. But the pro-McCarthy population could scarcely be expected to find virtue in McCarthy's enemy of the moment. I do not want, however, to over-interpret these tables. They are meant only to provide a simple thumbnail example of the kind of thing one might have done with the data available.

could have indicated the extent to which pro-McCarthy sentiments were ineffectively mobilized politically, revealing that McCarthy was unusually dependent upon regular Republican support both in the Senate and in his home state. McCarthy was more deeply a political phenomenon, perhaps more vulnerable to a change in the definition of his position by Washington politicians, than these politicians themselves realized. Third, policy scientists could have assembled information about current states and locations of pro-McCarthy sentiment. By tracing the ebbs and flows of McCarthy's popularity, inferences could have been made about the kinds of events triggering gains and losses in his popularity, hence about the size and locations of the margins of McCarthy's political appeal.

A latent function of making concerted demands for these kinds of data would no doubt have been a general improvement in the sources of supply for such data — notably the commercial polls. Issues that capture extraordinary public attention are precisely those in which polling organizations are willing to make their greatest investment; hence it is uniquely possible in these cases for policy scientists to help decision-makers to make rational choices, to

TABLE XIII. *Populations in Common Among Various Anti-McCarthy Attitudes*

<i>N</i>	I (%)	II (%)	III (%)	IV (%)	V (%)	VI (%)	Total population (%)
I = 527		61	36	86	84	64	37
II = 541	60		38	68	80	55	38
III = 295	65	69		80	81	63	21
IV = 611	74	60	39		88	63	43
V = 721	61	60	33	75		56	51
VI = 466	73	64	40	83	87		33

Source: Gallup Survey 530 K, April 1954.

Responses compared

- I. Extreme dislike (- 3 to 5) for McCarthy on 11 point scale.
- II. YES to "Do you think that McCarthy and Cohn used improper means in trying to get a commission for Schine?"
- III. No to "Do you think that Stevens and Adams tried to stop McCarthy from investigating the Army at Fort Monmouth?"
- IV. Unfavorable general opinion of Senator McCarthy.
- V. Disapproval of McCarthy's methods.
- VI. Less likely to vote for a congressional candidate supported by McCarthy.

help data-collection agencies to improve on the relevance of their inquiries, and, finally, to help themselves by cultivating increasingly meaningful and useful sources of information. The

brief demonstration I have made in the case of McCarthy is meant to suggest that such developments as these are not only desirable but feasible.

Pol
make
ences
vote,
vote,
politic
claims
group
electio
infanc
threat
rejecte
could
another
entific
opmer
have
veyors
interes
public
import
pressiv
Polit
interes
work
an ob
which
deman
various
actual
behavio
high p
analyze
zen is
similar
volved.
I would
the Ken
Margolis
Nelson
mond E.